

REMONSTRANCE

OF THE

Chamber of Commerce of New Haven,

AGAINST THE

Tariff Bill.

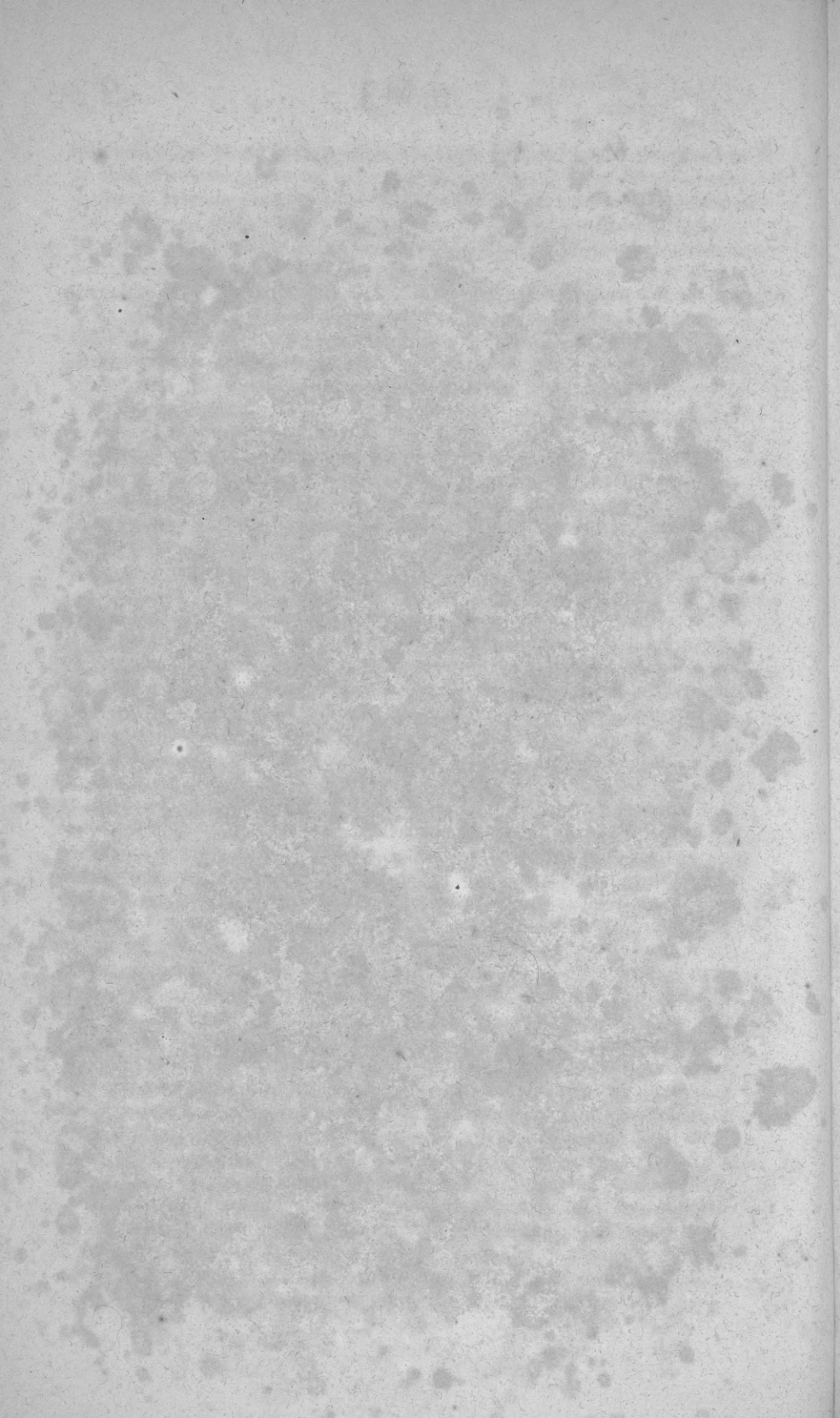
FEBRUARY 27, 1824.

Read, and referred to the committee of the whole House, to which is committed the
bill to amend the several acts for imposing duties on imports.

WASHINGTON:

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1824.



MEMORIAL.

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives, in Congress assembled—

The Memorial of the Chamber of Commerce of New Haven, in the State of Connecticut,

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH:

That, being impressed with a deliberate and decided conviction that the bill, now pending before Congress, proposing a great increase of duties on foreign imports, if passed into a law, will be productive of consequences extremely injurious to the best interests of the community, your memorialists cannot but view the manner in which this measure is pressed upon the attention of Congress with much surprize and regret.

Notwithstanding the great show of petitions from particular districts, and the excitement raised by the great efforts of some ardent individuals, we are fully persuaded, that a large majority of the citizens of the United States is decidedly opposed to an increase of duties on foreign imports.

Your memorialists are sincere advocates for the encouragement, protection, and support, of our own domestic manufactures. At the same time, we believe that the body politic, in order to be sound and healthy, must possess all its members in full vigor; that agriculture and manufactures cannot say to commerce, "we have no need of thee in disposing of our products;" and that nothing can be more inconsistent than for commerce to claim an existence independent of agriculture and manufactures. We believe that the interest of neither of these can flourish, in this country, without the aid of the other two; that these three great sources of the wealth of nations must grow up together, and with the growth of the nation. The oak which constitutes a ship's keel, derived its existence from an acorn; and no substitute can be found for the *time* that necessarily elapsed between its first germination and the period of its maturity. So it is in relation to manufactures. A portion of time, equal to the lapse of several generations, is inseparable for their general, successful, any permanent establishment, in any country. No regulations of Government; no amount of capital employed, can obviate the necessity of its being a work of progression. Any attempt to build up manufactures, suddenly, must fail; and, although the attempt may subject the whole community to much embarrassment and inconvenience, there is no class of citizens that will suffer so severely, by such failure, as the manufacturers themselves.

But, waiving the many, and, as we believe, unanswerable objections, to the principle of the bill, your memorialists beg leave, respect-

fully, to state, that, in their view, the high specific duties proposed to be laid on some articles, will operate unequally, and therefore unjustly. Among these may be mentioned the proposed specific duty, amounting to more than forty per cent., on bar iron, an article on which we consider the duty, already imposed, to be altogether too high, and one which we believe produces a positive injury to agriculture, commerce, and manufactures.

About thirty thousand tons of bar iron are annually imported into the United States. A large proportion of this iron is used and consumed in the northern states, including New England and the state of New York. The agriculture of this section of the country demands a large and constant supply of iron. At least ten times as much iron is made use of in cultivating a given quantity of land in New England, as is used in the cultivation of the same quantity of land in the southern Atlantic states. The implements of the northern farmer are chiefly of domestic manufacture, but are, to a great extent, made of foreign iron, and must, of necessity, continue to be made of foreign iron, even if the proposed duty should be laid, the iron from Russia and Sweden being better adapted to this purpose than that which is made in this country. The middle states manufacture iron for themselves, and some for the states to the south.

The tiring and ironing of carts, wagons, ploughs, and harrows, of the northern farmer, his chains, hoes, shovels, spades, scythes, &c. &c. are made mostly of foreign iron. He cannot move in winter, and no considerable distance in summer, unless his horses and oxen are shod with iron, and corked with steel. The quantity of foreign iron used in the single item of shoeing horses and oxen, in this section of the country, is not inconsiderable. Is it not, then, unequal and unjust, that the northern farmer should pay such an enormous tax on iron, which is to him an article of first necessity.

Much of the foreign iron, imported into the United States, is used in the construction of machinery, and in the manufacture of nails. Bar iron is emphatically a *rare material* to almost every other manufacturer, except the maker of bar iron. Iron and steel are the chief materials used in all manufactures of hardware, and in fabricating the implements used in all mechanical employments. These metals are principally used, and are, incomparably, more expensive than all other materials which are made use of in erecting the machinery employed in manufacturing cotton and woollen goods. In short, almost all tools, and a great proportion of all machinery, are made of these metals. Encourage other manufactures, by affording to every part of the country the greatest facility in obtaining bar iron, and you will create a demand for bar iron; but discourage other manufactures, by making bar iron scarce and dear, and you will, in a great degree, destroy the demand for bar iron itself.

A very considerable portion of the foreign iron brought into this country is used in ship building. If such duties are imposed on iron and hemp, as will cause these articles to cost nearly twice as much in this country as they cost in other countries, how is the American merchant to compete with the merchants of other countries, in build-

ing and navigating ships, the former discriminating duty on foreign tonnage being almost entirely abolished?

In answer to all this, the wealthy proprietors of the iron mines in the interior of Pennsylvania, will reply and say, indeed they have already said, "Let the New England people come to us for iron to shoe their horses, build their ships, and carry on their manufactures. We own ore enough to make a sufficiency of iron to supply all America, and it is a shame that it should lie dormant. We want an income from it. We will sell them as much ore for fifteen or twenty dollars, as will make a ton of iron, provided they will come and dig it out of the earth and refine it. Let the eastern people come here and make their iron, or employ somebody to do it. We have a fine productive soil also, and can supply them with provisions while they are thus employed. In this way, a market will be created at home for our surplus produce, and we shall then be rich and independent. Then money will not be sent out of the country to purchase foreign iron, and encourage foreign manufactures." This the proprietor of the iron mines, in the interior of Pennsylvania, calls "a plain practical view of things *as they should be.*" In reply to which, your memorialists respectfully ask permission to present a concise view of things *as they are.*

In the first place, money, to any considerable amount, is not sent out of the country to purchase iron. Ships employed in the Russian trade, take from the United States, to different ports in Europe, fish, rice, and the cheaper kinds of ardent spirits, such as New England rum, whiskey, &c. and bring back cargoes of hemp and iron. Thus the labor of the fisherman results in the production of the substantial article of bar iron; and, in this way, a given quantum of labor produces to the country a much larger quantity of iron than could be produced by the same quantum of labor, applied directly to working the ores of our own country. Suppose the fisherman to be equally as skilful and expert in making bar iron as he is in taking fish—even in that case, he could catch as many fish, in one day, as would pay a Russian or a Swede for as much iron as he could himself make in three days. Under these circumstances, can it be a wise regulation which shall compel the fisherman to relinquish his occupation, and go to making iron in Pennsylvania, in order that he may drink up the surplus whiskey which is made there, instead of exchanging whiskey and fish for iron and hemp, especially when it is considered that the exchange will produce to the country at least three times the quantity of iron that could be produced by the labor of the fisherman, aided by the strength of the whiskey?

The beneficent Creator has wisely placed mines of iron ore in the interior of Pennsylvania, which were undoubtedly designed for the supply of the inhabitants there; but it would be unreasonable and unjust to compel the inhabitants of other distant states to go there for a supply of iron, when, at the same time, they have a much cheaper and more convenient resource. The same kind Providence who gave iron ore to the interior of Pennsylvania, supplies the

Eastern waters with fish; and commerce, although it may not possess the full power of the philosopher's stone, of turning every thing into gold, has the power of converting fish and whiskey into iron; which is a much more useful metal to mankind than gold itself.

One feature in the bill now before Congress, which we think particularly unhappy, is the tax of six cents a bushel on coal. About one million of bushels of coal are annually imported into the United States, and the present duty of five cents a bushel pays into the Treasury about fifty thousand dollars. A tax upon coal raises the price of fuel in all our sea-ports. As fuel is consumed in very many of the manufactories of our country, and in every family, it seems to be consistent with good policy, and with a sincere desire to promote the prosperity of our manufacturing establishments, that it should be as cheap as possible. The inhabitants living on the whole sea-coast of the United States, and to a considerable distance in the interior; all those who live in the vicinity of our navigable rivers; and many who are concerned in manufactories, where fuel is consumed, are interested in having coal free from duty. To the ship-owner, it is a subject of much importance that coal should be free from duty. Our ships are sent to Great Britain with the products of our soil, which are much more bulky than the manufactures which we receive in exchange; of course, many vessels must return empty or in ballast. If they can take in cargoes of coal and obtain a small profit, that useful article will be brought, instead of ballasting the ships with sand or stone. Hence, was coal admitted free from duty, much larger quantities would be brought into the country, and the ship-owner would be enabled to make a small freight on his return cargo, when he could not obtain goods with which to load his vessel. But, notwithstanding these reasons, it is taxed. We cannot conceive that any one is benefitted by taxing it, unless it be a few individuals, perhaps from ten to twenty, who own coal-pits near the tide-waters. We would ask, is it wise, is it just, that the whole population of our sea-coast, and many of our ship-owners, should be laid under contribution for the benefit of a few persons?

It has generally been considered, that the owners of our manufacturing establishments, in order to be prosperous, must be able to purchase the raw material, which they work up at a low price. One article mentioned in the new tariff, now before Congress, as a proper object of taxation, is wool; and on this it is proposed to lay a tax, after June 1, 1827, of fifty per cent. Now, as our country does not furnish sufficient quantities of wool to supply our own consumption, we are at a loss to discern how a duty of fifty per cent. on that raw material is to increase the prosperity of our manufactories.

We have mentioned these particular articles in the proposed tariff, not because they are the only ones on which a tax is objectionable, or because the absurdity of laying a heavy duty is more apparent on these than on others; but merely because we thought it necessary to specify some few, in order to show that our objections to the proposed law were well founded.

It has often been said, and said with truth, that the merchants of this country have been very fair and honorable in their dealings with the Government: they have entered their goods honestly, and discountenanced smuggling. But, if the proposed tariff is adopted, such heavy duties will be laid on some articles, that there is great reason to fear that unprincipled men, for the sake of the great gain held out to them, will be induced to smuggle their goods as a common thing; and, in this case, in order to effect the execution of the laws, a little army of custom-house officers will be required on our extensive sea-board, to the great injury of the revenue of the country.

Your memorialists have full confidence that the commerce of the United States, if placed under a few simple regulations, will flourish and increase; and if commerce prospers, the agricultural and manufacturing interests will regularly advance and strengthen; but if new tariffs are proposed every year or two, and our commerce is hampered by heavy duties, they fear that, although our nation in its youth has been athletic and vigorous, it will soon be hurried to a premature old age. If the plan of altering and increasing the duties every year or two is continued, they fear the next step will be, to grant monopolies to individuals; a system fraught only with mischief, and under which a considerable portion of Europe has groaned for centuries.

With these views, your memorialists take the liberty to remonstrate against the new tariff, which has been proposed to your honorable body; and they pray, that it may never be adopted as a law of the land.

By order of the Chamber of Commerce,

G. TOTTEN, *President*,
T. DWIGHT, *Secretary*.

New Haven, February 24, 1824.

